



Marine Debris Report – July 2006

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NOAA and CRMO Conduct Vessel Inspection Training in Saipan, CNMI

Funding from the NOAA Marine Debris and the NOAA Coral programs helped support vessel inspection training for the Coastal Resources Management Office (CRMO) in Saipan during the week of July 17, 2006. Abandoned and derelict vessels are a problem in the waters around the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Because of the regular typhoons that pass through the islands, such derelict vessels frequently break loose and ground on adjacent coral reefs and seagrass beds. The purpose of this project is to provide training in vessel inspection for CNMI boating safety officers to help identify potential problem vessels before they sink or break apart and become a source of marine debris. The USCG and other local agencies will also send representatives. By keeping unsafe vessels out of CNMI waters, the local agencies hope to reduce coral injury and avoid the much greater expense of later vessel and debris removal. This training, led by a professional marine surveyor, is part of a larger outreach campaign targeted at boaters to prevent the occurrence of derelict vessels and their resulting marine debris.

NOAA Continues Work to Remove Marine Debris from Main Hawaiian Islands

NOAA has returned once again to target marine debris as it starts the second stage of a project aimed at locating and reducing the presence of marine debris on the shores of the main Hawaiian Islands. The removal effort follows an extensive helicopter survey earlier this year which revealed the presence of an estimated 129 tons of derelict fishing gear and other debris along the shores and nearshore reefs of 6 of the main islands. The initial removal effort focused on Oahu, where in sixteen days of operations, NOAA removed 216 net piles totaling over 15MT of derelict fishing gear from the shorelines. The vast majority of the 176 debris sites were on Oahu's windward coast, highlighting the influence of northeast tradewinds on debris accumulation patterns.

Between February and May 2006, NOAA completed helicopter surveys to assess the distribution, abundance, and impact of marine debris in the main Hawaiian Islands. The islands of Oahu, Kauai, Hawaii, Maui, Lanai, and

Molokai were successfully surveyed in their entirety in 13 days over the course of 50 flight hours. A total of 711 sites comprising an estimated 129 tons (or 258,000 pounds) of marine debris were identified, with the majority of the debris observed found on beaches.

Oahu, Kauai, and Lanai lead the other islands in both individual debris sites and estimated weight of debris. The survey also reveals that windward-facing shorelines contain substantially more derelict fishing gear than their leeward counterparts. This observation indicates that northeasterly trade winds play a primary role in debris deposition.

Louisiana Sea Grant uses Fishing Tournament Event to Promote Marine Debris Awareness

Saturday, July 15, NOAA and Louisiana Sea Grant (LSG) held their first voluntary debris marking day to coincide with the 21st Annual Lake Charles Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) Trout Shootout fishing tournament. The project team distributed buoys, data sheets, maps, and several dozen sections of PVC to fishermen while they launched or stopped by Calcasieu Point Landing. Print and television media were also on hand to document the project's efforts. "Even though this event is a serious fishing event, approximately 10 individuals returned GPS coordinates of marked debris. Many others vowed to keep the buoys and continue to mark marine debris in the future," stated LSG's Justin Farrell. CCA then hosted a drawing for five rod-and-reel combinations from the returned data sheets as an incentive to volunteers. The project is currently planning another volunteer-based marking day for August.

The volunteer-based Marine Debris Marking & Mapping Project on Calcasieu Lake, Moss Lake and West Cove was originally scheduled for Saturday, June 24, but had to be postponed due to adverse environmental conditions and ongoing clean-up operations surrounding a 70,000 barrel oil and wastewater spill at CITGO's Indian Marais on-site drainage facility. "It was a difficult decision to postpone such a volunteer-driven event, especially given the amazing local support and enthusiasm from groups such as CCA, the Power Squadron, and the pilots," said LSG's Justin Farrell. Closures that affected the project included the Calcasieu Ship Channel (June 22-July 1), Moss Lake (June 23-present), Calcasieu Lake (June 23), and the Calcasieu Point Landing (June 24-July 8). Additional closures included Prien Lake (June 23-July 2).

This effort is made possible with involvement of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey with the funding and support of NOAA's Marine Debris Program, which is part of the NOAA Office of Response and Restoration (National Ocean Service). The NOAA Marine Debris Program works with other NOAA offices and partners to support national, state, local and international efforts to protect and conserve our nation's natural resources and coastal waterways from the impacts of marine debris.

Marine Debris in the News

ALTERED OCEANS - Plague of Plastic Chokes the Seas

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/oceans/la-me-ocean2aug02,1,7826699,full.story?ctrack=1&cset=true>

Cleanups help O'ahu beaches stay neat, safe

<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2006/Jul/17/lh/FP607170339.html>

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